

Belmont Human Rights Commission
Belmont Town Hall
October 1, 2009
Minutes

Members Present: Carl Brauer, Nan Donald, Chuck Laverty, Laura Panos, Paul Solomon, Connie Williams, Fran Yuan

Members Absent: Lisa Bernt, Julie Cicalese

Liaisons Present: Peter Hoerr, Belmont Police Dept.; Kathryn Bonfiglio, Belmont Against Racism

The meeting began at 7:10 pm. A quorum was present. Connie Williams agreed to take minutes.

September minutes were corrected and approved.

Phone Line: Carl Brauer reported that a series of calls from a male caller came in on September 23 and 24. The caller appeared to have personal/mental health issues. He left no name and did not raise issues related to human rights. Another call came in from a woman from Central America who asked what the Commission did. Her call was prompted by the article on employment by Laura Panos for the Belmont paper. The phone number was published at the end of the article.

Fran Yuan presented a draft of a form for recording phone contacts. Commissioners agreed that we should keep a notebook to record calls to HRC.

Peter Hoerr reminded us that this would be a public record. Consequently, we should be sure to take into account issues related to privacy and disclosure. How we log calls is "A work in progress" that the Commission will revisit.

Roles for Commission members: We discussed ways of organizing our work. For example, should we ask one or two members to take responsibility for outreach and publicity. Laura Panos agreed to do outreach and publicity.

HRC Web site is a tool for outreach. It would be useful to have links to our web site related to the protection of persons with disabilities and to MCAD. Sandra Curro at Town Hall is willing to modify the site if we give her the information. Our brochures need to be reviewed and updated.

The discussion on outreach continued with suggestions of contacts concerning housing: Nancy Marsh, who contacted Fran before our Sept. meeting with concerns at Waverly Woods, former Commissioner Judie Feins and Jeff Jacoby.

Julie Cicalese and Fran Yuan attended a MCAD training session. Carl attended one previously. Persons from several towns attend the training sessions, share ideas, and get information about such areas as mediation and how to judge whether or not a situation presents a legal issue

At the November meeting a member from the Lawyers' Committee on Civil Rights will speak to the Commission.

We again turned our attention to outreach with a focus on Belmont organizations such as the Religious Council, Senior Center, town realtors and METCO.

Liaisons Report: Peter Hoerr reported that there was a road rage incident involving a racial slur. There was a brief journal entry about the incident but no other information such as identity of the person. Kathryn Bonfiglio reported that the Martin Luther King Day speaker will be Pineal Joseph, a professor at Tufts, formerly at Brandeis. He is an African American historian who writes about racial issues. MLK day is on Monday, Jan. 18, 2010. Kathryn also reported on the Race Dialogues between Belmont and Boston residents. The interest was high and the conversations useful and included a visit by Belmont participants to an African American Episcopal (AME) church.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 pm.